



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Kevin Kerstein
Publicity Manager
Churchill Downs Racetrack
(610) 420-6971 (mobile)
(502) 635-4712 (office)
Kevin.Kerstein@KyDerby.com

COX'S 'FUTURE STARS' ABARTA, AUNT PEARL, ESSENTIAL QUALITY LOG FINAL WORKOUTS PRIOR TO BREEDERS' CUP

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Friday, Oct. 30, 2020) – With one week remaining until “Future Stars Friday” at the Breeders’ Cup World Championships, trainer **Brad Cox**’s 2-year-old trio of **Abarta** (Juvenile Turf), **Aunt Pearl** (Juvenile Fillies Turf) and **Essential Quality** (Juvenile) logged their final works on Friday morning at Churchill Downs.

Godolphin’s undefeated \$400,000 Breeders’ Futurity (Grade I) winner **Essential Quality** was the first of the Cox workers at 9 a.m. (all times Eastern). With **Florent Geroux** aboard, **Essential Quality** worked five furlongs in 1:01 outside of **Flurry Racing**’s multiple graded stakes winner **Mr. Misunderstood**. The duo clipped through early fractions of :12.2 and :24.1, according to Churchill Downs clocker **John Nichols**.

Moments later, **Donegal Racing** and **Newton Anner Stud Farm**’s \$200,000 Bourbon (GII) runner-up **Abarta** worked a half-mile in :47.60 outside of **Juddmonte Farm**’s stakes winner **Set Piece** (GB). **Abarta** breezed through splits of :11.60, :23.80 and :35 with a five-furlong gallop out of 1:00.40.

Geroux returned to the track about 10 minutes later aboard **Michael Dubb**, **Madaket Stables**, **Peter Deutsch**, **Michael Kisber** and **The Elkstone Group**’s \$150,000 Jessamine Stakes (GII) winner **Aunt Pearl** (IRE) and worked a half-mile in :48.60 outside unraced 2-year-old filly **Palm Cottage**. **Aunt Pearl** started two lengths behind her workmate and worked through fractions of :24.80 and :36.80.

“We have some really nice 2-year-olds in our barn this year,” Cox said. “A lot of them have already shown early promise. **Essential Quality** is growing up well. He’s continuing to learn and I’m very pleased with how he’s progressing. He has a ton of raw talent which he’s shown in both of his starts. We added blinkers to him over the summer to help him focus a little bit more and they’ve really helped. We have experience around two turns and we have experience at Keeneland, which is always helpful. It’s 1 1/16 miles, so it’s a short stretch. You need to be in position when you turn for home.

“**Abarta** had a really nice late kick in the Bourbon to run second. He didn’t have the best of trips but really showed some adversity that afternoon. I think it’s good he has already run well over that course.

“**Aunt Pearl** acted like she could really run at the start. She and **Essential Quality** were two of them that really jumped out to us early in their training and showed they have some ability. The good ones kind of do that – they’ll let you know there is a lot of talent there. Given the pedigree we were optimistic she’d be able to carry her speed around two turns. We thought about taking her to Saratoga over the summer but when Churchill’s condition book came out I thought it might be better to keep her at home. It’s turned out really well so far.”

Also on the Friday work tab was trainer **Dale Romans** trio of juvenile contenders: **Girl Daddy** (four furlongs, :48.20), **Sittin On Go** (four furlongs, :47.40) and **Smiley Sobotka** (four furlongs, :47.60). Trainer **Mark Casse** also worked Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf (GI) contender **Spanish Loveaffair** four furlongs in :48.60.

More than two inches of rain fell in the Louisville area on Thursday and it caused several trainers to alter their training for their Breeders’ Cup contenders. There are 27 Breeders’ Cup contenders scheduled to work Saturday at Churchill Downs (with race): **Arklow** (Turf), **Art Collector** (Dirt Mile), **Beau Recall** (Mile), **Bell’s the One** (Filly & Mare Sprint), **By My Standards** (Classic), **Casa Creed** (Mile), **Crazy Beautiful** (Juvenile Fillies), **Factor This** (Mile), **Global Campaign** (Classic), **Got Stormy** (Turf Sprint), **Harvey’s Lil Goil** (Filly & Mare Turf), **Hog Creek Hustle** (Sprint), **Knicks Go** (Dirt Mile), **Lady Kate** (Distaff), **Manny Wah** (Sprint), **Monomoy Girl** (Distaff), **Mr Freeze** (Dirt Mile), **Mr Money** (Dirt Mile), **Owendale** (Dirt Mile), **Sally’s Curlin** (Filly & Mare Sprint), **Sconsin** (Filly & Mare Sprint), **Silver Dust** (Dirt Mile), **Simply Ravishing** (Juvenile Fillies), **Swiss Skydiver** (Distaff/Classic), **Title Ready** (Classic), **Tom’s d’Etat** (Classic), **War of Will** (Dirt Mile).

In total, there are 43 Breeders’ Cup contenders based at Churchill Downs and Trackside Louisville. That is the most of any location pre-entered into this year’s event. Next is Keeneland with 39 contenders followed by 38 international runners, 25 from Belmont Park and 21 based at Santa Anita.

TV SCHEDULE – Racing at Churchill Downs is every Wednesday-Sunday with daily first post at 1 p.m. Below is the TV schedule on the Fox Sports family of networks:

Friday: FS2 (12:30-6 p.m.) | MSG+ (12:30-6 p.m.)

Saturday: FS2 (12-6 p.m.) | MSG+ (12-6 p.m.)

Sunday: FS2 (12-6 p.m.) | MSG+ (12:30-6 p.m.)

DOWN THE STRETCH – There was a \$52,729 carryover in the 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot for racing on Friday at Churchill Downs. First post was 1 p.m. ... **“Inside Churchill Downs”** will air its special Breeders’ Cup preview episode Friday at 6 p.m. on ESPN 680/105.7. Join Churchill Downs’ **Darren Rogers, Kevin Kerstein, Scott Shapiro** and **Travis Stone** for a one-hour preview of this year’s event. Those outside the Louisville area can listen live on www.espnlouisville.com. ... For more information and to purchase tickets for the Fall Meet, visit www.churchilldowns.com.

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